

November 2020

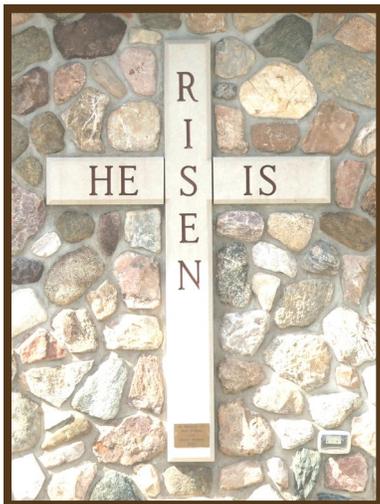
The Bethany Messenger

The newsletter of Bethany Lutheran Church

130 O'Dill Drive, Norway, Michigan 49870 906-563-8472

Rev. Dave Johnson, Pastor

www.norwaybethany.org office e-mail: bethanyoffice@norwaymi.com



Bethany is best known as the village outside of Jerusalem where Lazarus, Mary and Martha lived, The word “Bethany” is from the Hebrew for “place of welcome.” Our mission statement reflects the good news of our message to all: “Joyfully we profess our faith through God's unconditional love. Here and now God dwells in all our lives, bears our sins on the cross, and forgives us all.”

O God, generous and supreme, your loving Son lived among us, instructing us in the ways of humility and justice. Continue to ease our burdens, and lead us to serve alongside of him, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

Welcome to Worship

**Bethany Lutheran Church welcomes you at 9 a.m. every Sunday
for worship indoors and live-streamed online on Facebook.**

See our web site for a link to the service, which remains available after the worship hour.

For those who worship online, Pastor Dave will continue to bless communion kits which are available for pickup every Saturday afternoon from 1:00 – 2:00 pm and Sunday morning from 8:00 – 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot at Bethany Lutheran Church. This will be done so that anyone worshipping with us online on Sunday morning will have the opportunity to receive communion with the community. Bulletins will also be available for pick-up from Pastor or can be downloaded from the Bethany web site. If you need someone to drop off a communion kit at your doorstep, please let Pastor Dave know by calling or texting him at 651-769-3365 or by e-mailing him at ftp565@yahoo.com.

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PASTOR'S PROFOUND PONDERINGS

John 20:11-18 – 11: *But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. As she wept, she bent down and looked into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white sitting where Jesus' body had been lying, one at the head and one at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" Mary replied, "They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!" 14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.*

15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" Because she thought he was the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus replied, "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. Go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene came and informed the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them what Jesus had said to her.

I love to work on puzzles. There have been times that I have started a puzzle at the beginning of the day with the challenge to finish it by the end of the day. Just for clarification, these are 500-1000-piece puzzles, not 24-piece ones. There is one thing that is extremely frustrating, however, when working on a puzzle, and that's when you get to the point of putting in the very last piece of the puzzle only to discover that it's not there.

My sister and I were working on a puzzle together when she was visiting for Christmas, and we had this happen. We had gotten down to putting in the very last piece of this puzzle, and it was nowhere to be found. In our time working on the puzzle, pieces had dropped off the table from time to time, but we were diligent about picking up the pieces that fell. Maybe one was missed? Maybe it got kicked underneath something around the puzzle area? We looked for hours and could not find the missing piece; it was lost, gone forever. It turns out, someone decided to play a prank on us and hid one puzzle piece while we weren't paying attention. It was taken from us and we were so relieved when we got it back.

As we get into the beginning of November, we celebrate All Saints' Day. This is the day in which we reflect on those that we had lost and those who have been taken away from us as well as the love and faith that they left behind. And in a year when we have lost so much, and so much has been taken away from us, I wanted to focus in this article what All Saints' Sunday is about because it's not really about loss. It's about hope.

On All Saints' Day, we light a candle for all of those who shared their life, love, and faith with us before they died. We light a candle to remind us that just because they are gone right now and it feels like there's a piece missing from the puzzle which makes up the picture of our lives, death does not have the final say in the matter anymore. In fact, nothing does.

There is absolutely nothing that will ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Just as Jesus was risen from the tomb and appeared to Mary, restoring the peace of her life that was lost, Jesus risen means that He also restores our broken pieces when we lose those closest to us and when things are taken from us. In Him we have hope; because He lives our loved ones live also. The light doesn't die; it still shines. Whatever you have lost; whatever has been taken from you; whatever piece might be missing in your life hold onto the hope that Jesus has overcome it all and there will be a time when that missing piece will be put back into place.

In God's Peace,



Pastor Dave

Member Assistance and Participation Needed on Congregational Council

Dear Bethany Congregation,

The Congregation Council is in need of your assistance and participation. At present, the Council consists of five members (Erv Sparapani, President, Ray Anderson, Vice President, Vicki Underhill, Sally Borga, Mike Randall), and Pastor Dave. Two members resigned over the summer, and the Council has not been able to replace them. Erv Sparapani and Vicki Underhill will be going off the Council this January, 2021, which means we need at least four members (for the annual meeting in January) to volunteer to serve on the Council. Further, Sally Borga and Mike Randall have one more year on the Council. Sally and Mike will be off the Council in January, 2022, a year from now, which means, if no one steps forward, the only person left on the Council, with Pastor Dave, will be Ray.

The hard truth of the matter is, if no one comes forward to serve on the Council, in two years, or less, Bethany will, effectively, not have a Council.

These have been difficult times for all of us. We are constantly trying to determine how to navigate this new territory, and maintain a viable, functioning Bethany church family.

In order to make appropriate decisions for the Congregation, a Council is probably necessary. But, unless enough people come forward to serve on the Council, decisions are difficult to make.

If you are willing to serve on the Council, please contact Pastor Dave, or any member of the current Council.

Bethany needs you! The Congregation Council NEEDS YOU!

Please consider serving.

In God's peace,

Erv Sparapani

Bethany Congregation Council

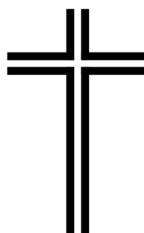
(the next council meeting is Tuesday, November 10 at 6:30 p.m.)

Ervin Sparapani—President
W8347 N Spring Lake Lane
Iron Mountain, MI 49801
Phone: 906-774-5013
efs@svsu.edu

Sally Borga
N1611 S. Circle Dr.
Norway, MI 49870
Cell Phone: 906-458-7108
bborga@norwaymi.com

Mike Randall
N1455 Ball Rd.
Vulcan, MI 49892
Phone: 906-282-5759
uprandall.mike@gmail.com

Ray Anderson
Vice President & Treasurer
603 Maple Street
Norway, MI 49870
Home Phone: (906) 563-7107
Cell Phone: (906) 282-3503
[Email: randerson@norwaymi.com](mailto:randerson@norwaymi.com)



Vicki Underhill
726 Brown Street
Norway, MI 49870
Phone: 563-5937
vpunderhill118@gmail.com

Christmas Giving Update

Christmas is just around the corner! As with everything else this year, COVID has us rethinking how we will handle our Christmas giving. We think it is important to make every effort to be diligent about health and safety while still meeting the needs of those who could use our help. It is important to note that the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (the annual recipient of our Christmas giving) is still operating under suspended face-to-face contact with their clients. They will be discussing Christmas giving soon, but we do not yet have a good understanding of what their needs may be for the year.

Until we hear definitively, let us assume that we will do "something" to bless members of our community for Christmas, but that it certainly will not look Christmas is just around the corner! As with everything else this year, COVID has us rethinking how we will handle our Christmas giving. We think it is important to make every effort to be diligent about health and safety while still meeting the needs of those who could use our help. It is important to note that the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (the annual recipient of our Christmas giving) is still operating under suspended face-to-face contact with their clients. They will be discussing Christmas giving soon, but we do not yet have a good understanding of what their needs may be for the year.

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community for Christmas, but that it certainly will not look exactly the same as it has in previous years. We have discussed some options that do not involve large group shopping excursions, but are awaiting advice from MDHHS before planning any further. We know that no matter what is decided, it is a different format for our giving and probably won't make anyone feel quite as warm and fuzzy as previous years have done. That said, we know that the need is still great, and we will choose a socially conscious and responsible option for our congregation to help some of the more vulnerable members of our community.

We will accept monetary donations for this purpose through Sunday, December 6, 2020. As always, your generosity is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions, please reach out to Norada Perucco or Amber Schiltz.

Help us to update the Bethany Congregational Directory.

If you receive an e-mail asking for your household information, please get back to the church office by e-mail or telephone.

Thank you!

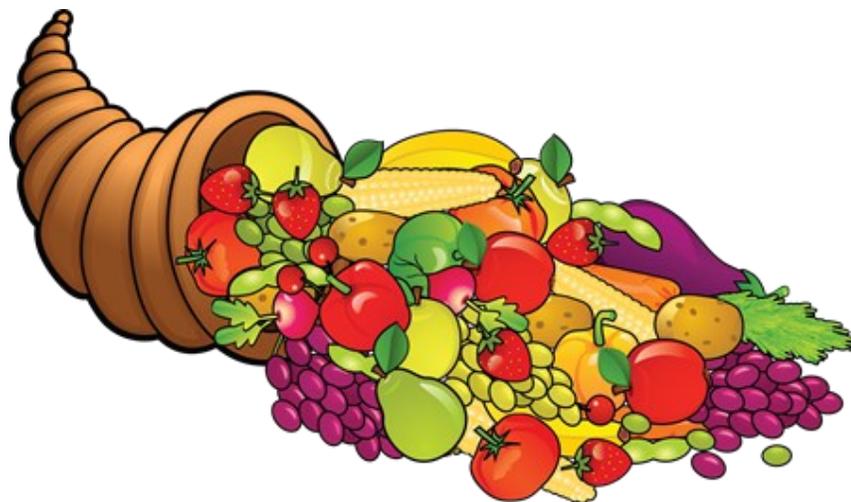
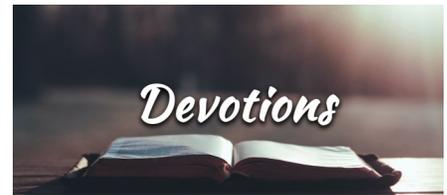


Ruby Burrus, Andrea Anderson, Arlene, Pam Nelson, Joy, Montee, **Tim, Barbara, Mike Day; Ava Johnson Mitchell** and all those who are having difficulties with being shut in for months because of Covid -19.

If you have an update or addition to our prayer list, please call or e-mail the Bethany office.
Thank you!

Tune in to Pastor Dave's weekly 10-minute devotion, posted every Wednesday on the Bethany Facebook Page.

The Daily Devotion Booklets "Christ in Our Home" are available at Bethany. Pick one up on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning or call the church office at 906-563-8472 to have one mailed to you.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

11/02 Audra Johnson

11/07 Steve Perucco

11/09 Johnny Mattia

11/10 Tristan Heigl

11/16 Gerry Nickels

11/10 Renee Trudeau

11/13 Alex Heigl

11/13 Kyra Johnson

11/15 Jeremy Bjorkman

11/16 Daniel Bjorkman

11/18 Norada Perucco

11/30 Ericka Burklund

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

11/12/94 Lisa & Mark Anderson

11/26/05 Kimberly & Matt Mollick

Join the conversation and fellowship

Members and friends of Bethany are invited to

Community Coffee, every Tuesday at 9 a.m. at Bethany

Men's Breakfast and Bible Study, every Thursday at 7 a.m. at Bethany



Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church
130 O'Dill Drive
Norway, MI 49870

Return Service Requested

Let Us Pray. The ELCA Prayer Ventures for October 2020 include these suggestions and many more:

Give thanks for everyone God has gathered in the body of Christ — those who are living and those who have passed. Praise God for the diverse talents given to us that the Spirit uses to encourage faith in others, strengthen the community of believers and do God's work in the world.

Pray for the ministry and witness of native congregations and the work of the American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association, that they might flourish and grow.

Pray that national, state, and local elected leaders govern with compassion, justice, concern for people with critical needs and a commitment to the well-being of all people and communities.

Continue to pray for people in our nation and across the world who are threatened by COVID-19, giving thanks for the dedicated professionals, family members, and friends who provide them with loving care.

Remember and give thanks for the service and personal sacrifice of veterans — the women and men who have served our nation in times of peace and war. Pray for those currently serving in the military and for their families, especially during times of separation, that they will know they are remembered, valued and cared for by their faith community and siblings in Christ.

For the full monthly Prayer Ventures throughout the year, visit <https://www.elca.org/en/Resources/Prayer-Ventures>.

